

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Fumiko Nunotani, 72, homemaker

"In order to go surfing, to catch the bigger waves--and those days, the surfboard was a very heavy board. Two, three people, sometimes, had to carry. And you had to walk way, way out to catch the waves to come in. Because it used to be all sand."

Fumiko (Kuramoto) Nunotani's parents came to Hawai'i from Hiroshima, Japan sometime after the turn of the century.

Born in Waikīkī in 1914, Fumiko lived there until December of 1941 when she married and moved to her present home in Kapahulu, just minutes away from her childhood haunts.

When Waikīkī was still a marsh with scattered duck ponds and streams here and there, Nunotani remembers how she used to catch dragonflies, o'opus and crabs near a stream that passed by her home.

As a young woman, she learned how to surf and was considered by many of her friends to be one of the "belles" of Waikīkī Beach.

She attended Waikīkī School and Washington Intermediate before graduating from McKinley High School in 1933.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Fumiko Nunotani (FN)

March 25, 1985

Kapahulu, O'ahu

BY: Michael Mauricio (MM)

MM: This is an interview with Fumiko Nunotani on March 25, 1985 at her home in Kapahulu, Honolulu. Interview conducted by Michael Mauricio.

Okay, Mrs. Nunotani, can you tell me a little bit about your parents? Where they were from . . .

FN: My father and mother, they're both from Hiroshima[-ken].

MM: Both from Hiroshima? Do you know why they came to Hawai'i?

FN: I guess, [to] try out something new.

MM: You mentioned something about like your father was a sergeant in the Japanese army. Can you tell me little bit about that?

FN: He never talked about [it] much, but all he did was tell us that he was in Manchuria, and that he was a sergeant in the army. And he was saying that you don't see the sun, [you see it] only about three months a year or so. He used to talk about, you know, they get this huge vat with. . . . What do you call that? Mustard cabbage or tsukemono-like, eh? And had lot of maggots on top.

MM: Yeah? And they used to eat that?

FN: Well, you just rinse 'em off and eat. And then, he said like Manchuria was so cold. And he's on guard. Sometimes they fall asleep. He said the metal [of the rifle] would touch the skin, the skin would peel off.

MM: Yeah? It stuck?

FN: It stuck. That cold, you know, that Manchuria was. That's about all. He hardly talked too much about his army life.

MM: That was the Chinese . . .

FN: Russian war.

MM: Oh, the Russian war with Japan, eh?

FN: Japan, yeah. Because I know we used to sing that song, "Japan katta, Russia maketa," or something like that in Japanese. When we were kids, we used to sing, you know. Yeah. You know, Japan won from Russia, so we used to sing that when [we] were young. "Japan katta, Russia maketa," or something like that.

MM: (Chuckles) I never heard that song.

FN: Yeah, we used to sing, you know.

MM: And did your mother ever tell you what she used to do . . .

FN: In Japan?

MM: What it was like back there?

FN: No, my mother and father, they never talk about their life in Japan too much.

MM: Do you know when they were born?

FN: No. I wish I kept it [their records]. I have a date where they were born and everything on a card, but I don't know where I left it. I couldn't find it. See, like my father was the only son. He had two sisters out here, they're both dead now, and then one in Japan. So he wasn't in da kine poor family, you know. He had property.

MM: In Japan?

FN: In Japan, see. And then, after my mother died--she died when she was about forty-six--he went [back to Japan] and then he sold the property.

MM: After the war [World War II], then?

FN: Before the war. Just before the war. And then, he gave some to the sisters, so much, and everything. But I think the property was sold before he went Japan, you know. Because he told me that when he went Japan, the money, he said, from over here, he doesn't have to bring too much. You know, those days, they used to go on the steamer, huh? He said the money was intact, so he made a big. . . . What that memorial service for all the [dead] relatives in Japan? And then, he gives so much to the sister. He said, since he wen cut off the dual citizen[ship] of my brother folks, he thought might as well sell the property in Japan.

MM: What do you mean, they cut off the citizenship?

FN: You know, way back, like my brother folks, they gotta report 'em to the Japanese consulate, eh? They either could be American citizen or Japan. And yet, still, they are Japan citizen. So my father

had to go to the consulate and . . .

MM: Cut off the Japanese citizenship?

FN: Cut off the Japanese citizenship.

MM: Yeah, say that they were American citizens?

FN: American citizens. I should have kept all those papers, yeah? I had, you know, until not too long ago. After my husband died, I threw all his and my father's all away, same time.

MM: You know when he [FN's father] arrived in Hawai'i?

FN: No. I had their passports and everything and I dumped it. Both my father and mother.

MM: Must have been about the early 1900s, then?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: Your brothers were all born here, right?

FN: Mm hmm, everyone born here.

MM: In Waikīkī?

FN: In Waikīkī.

MM: Did you know why he [FN's father] went to Waikīkī instead of other places on the island?

FN: I don't know. I know he was saying that he used to work for one family, and then, somehow, he went to work for Moana Hotel. And before that, while he was working at Moana Hotel, he used to go to, I don't know, some kind of school to learn how to speak English. Then, he had an accident where his head got sort of smashed with the elevator. Since then, he said the memory came kind of hard to remember, so he quit the English class. They used to have a English class.

MM: That was through the Buddhist church?

FN: I think so.

MM: Was there a lot of Japanese families living in Waikiki?

FN: Quite a bit.

MM: Around your area [near Paoakalani and 'Ōhūa Avenue]?

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. Had the Nakamura family, then had the Nadamoto

family--you know, Dr. [Ichiro] Nadamoto family.

MM: Dr. Nadamoto?

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. He's the bone specialist. And then, the [Dr. Tsutomu] Sasaki. The camp. And then, my father had that residential--I mean, that, you know, well . . .

MM: He had that property.

FN: They would call it a camp, too, but they never did, you know. And then, right next, had another group of Japanese. Mrs. Sano, and then had that [Toshio] Yasumatsu [family], and all of those. Get quite a bit.

MM: Yasumatsu is the one from Kapi'olani Cleaners?

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. Kapi'olani Cleaners.

MM: How did your father get hold of that property that . . .

FN: For lease.

MM: Did you folks own that?

FN: No, lease. My father tried to buy from Queen Lili'uokalani, but she won't sell. You had to lease. Those days was cheap, I think. It was fifty dollars a year, I think. Before that was twenty [dollars a year]---yeah, fifty dollars a year. That's all, you know. Because like water [bill], with all the families living, he only used to pay about five dollars a month or something.

MM: You folks had plumbing like that?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: Utilities, electricity.

FN: Electricity. I mean, as I grew older, the electricity came in.

MM: Oh, before, didn't have then?

FN: No. Before, we used to live in one old house. We used to have that kerosene lamp, you know. Two types, one with the chimney and one you hand carry one.

MM: Oh, yeah? One with the glass chimney and . . .

FN: Yeah, that was for the house. And then, for outside we used to get the one that they have. You carry it around.

MM: What did they call that?

FN: I don't know.

- MM: Did you guys ever call that the kukui hele pō?
- FN: No. That's one thing, I don't know much about Hawaiian words, you know.
- MM: Oh. Plantation guys used to call it that.
- FN: Like my husband, he's from Lāna'i. He used lot of Hawaiian words, but I (ask), "What you talking about?" There weren't too many Hawaiian families.
- MM: How many houses did you folks have on that lot?
- FN: Had one, two, three, four, but they were duplex.
- MM: They were all wooden houses, right?
- FN: The front house was built way back, so it looked like, you know, plantation-looking house, eh? High elevation. It was elevated. But the one in the back, when we had the pond, the contractor built sort of a modern house.
- MM: Modern, you mean, with concrete?
- FN: No, no. When I say modern, means that you had the living room, and then the bedroom, and then the kitchen, and then the bathroom. But it's just like this kind, my house, like. The one that we were living in, you get the living room, and then a bedroom right in the center, and then the kitchen with the toilet right in there, you know.
- MM: Oh. You mean, the other houses wasn't built like that?
- FN: No, no. All had separate rooms. With doors and everything. But the one that we was living in was just one straight. You go from one room to the other room in one straight row. You know what I mean? Like a hallway, huh? With no doors or anything.
- MM: Was all single wall, eh?
- FN: Mm hmm [yes].
- MM: Where was this piece of property located in Waikīkī?
- FN: You see the St. Augustine Church? And then they used to have a nuns' convent, you know, for the nuns to live in.
- MM: Where was that?
- FN: I mean, they used to have the church, the auditorium, and then the nuns used to live (in a house next to the church). After the Japanese people had to move out, the Hawaiian people who owned that property (next to ours) gave (it) to St. Augustine Church, so they built

the first St. Augustine School until they moved to (Paoakalani Avenue).

MM: So, your folks' property was right on. . . . Well, not right on Kalākaua [Avenue].

FN: No. 'Ōhūa Avenue.

MM: On 'Ōhūa [Avenue]. Behind the church, though, yeah?

FN: The church (was) across [the street].

MM: Have you been down there recently?

FN: No, I haven't been there for long time. I don't know what that place look like. You know what I mean? You living here, and yet you don't bother.

MM: Okay. So, when were you born? You were born in Waikīkī, right?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: Were you born in a hospital or . . .

FN: No, those days, never have hospitals, so we were all born at home. Midwife.

MM: Midwife? Do you remember who your midwife was?

FN: No.

MM: Of course, you never saw her. And what is your birthdate, anyway?

FN: July 17, 1914.

MM: Okay. Can you tell me, let's say, about what you remember doing when you were a little kid?

FN: Ah, you know, when we used to have the stream in the back, we used to catch those crabs. You know, those black crabs. We used to catch 'em.

MM: You're talking about the 'a'ama crab?

FN: Yeah. And the black 'o'opus, you know. And then, those days, used to get those bulrushes that used to grow tall like that. We used to go running inside there. We used to weave slippers out of that.

MM: Oh, yeah? You still know how to do that?

FN: I forgot. You know, we would dry that up. Just for fun, you know, we used to weave. And then, used to have so many dragonflies. We used to catch that and tie a string on it.

(Laughter)

FN: Terrible, huh? (Laughs)

MM: Yeah, I used to do that, too.

FN: Oh, yeah? But now you don't see no dragonflies.

MM: Hardly any, yeah?

FN: Yeah. But when we were kids, there used to get two types: the blue one and the red one.

MM: The blue and the red one? Yeah, yeah, that's right.

FN: We used to sneak up on them and just grab by the wing, and then tie a string around the body. And then, the other one was, we used to go and fly kite. You split the bamboo, you know, and get the newspaper, and make paste out of the rice. We used to put--what do you call that?--a rag tail, and we used to go fly up and down. You know, where after they dug that [Ala Wai] Canal used to (be) all vacant lot. So we used to go there, fly our kite.

MM: So, you're talking about, like still had the stream and the pond?

FN: No. After they dug the canal.

MM: After they dug the canal, uh huh. Like . . .

FN: Like when we had the stream and the pond [prior to the building of Ala Wai Canal], we used to go to Kapi'olani Park.

MM: To Kapi'olani Park? Did they have that Makee Island over there?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: Still yet.

FN: And I know, what it the Emperor (Taishō), I think? When his birthday time, oh, my mother used to make all kind of fancy food, and we used to go down [Kapi'olani Park]. . . . Big celebration, you know, those. They call it Tenchō-setsu, eh? The emperor's birthday. Used to [be a] big occasion.

MM: Oh, yeah? And all the Japanese people used to come to Kapi'olani Park and celebrate that?

FN: Celebrate that. You used to go, you know, make all fancy kind sushi, and all that kind food. Usually, my mother folks, they don't make unless it was New Year's. And then, we used to go over there and eat. After that he died, they stopped that celebration.

MM: You're talking about the emperor?

FN: I think that was the (Taishō) emperor. And then, came to the Shōwa, huh?

MM: The Shōwa. That's the modern day . . .

FN: The one now.

MM: Now, uh huh. So, you know that stream, you said, that ran by your folks' house, you said you caught 'o'opu?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: You guys ever ate that?

FN: No. We used to give it to the Hawaiian people next door.

MM: Oh. You just caught 'em for fun?

FN: Yeah, we used to catch 'em for fun.

MM: You never sell 'em? (Chuckles)

FN: You know, it [the 'o'opu] goes between all those black rocks, stone, and it's hard to see because they're black and the stone is black, too.

MM: Did they get big?

FN: Oh, they only come to about so many size, and they don't grow too big.

MM: How about the 'ōpae, the mountain 'ōpae?

FN: Never had, I think. We never used to go for that. We want 'ōpae, we used to go to Kūhiō Beach. And we used to go pick what do you call those black shell?

MM: Pipipi?

FN: Yeah. And we used to boil it and eat that.

(Laughter)

MM: How you eat that?

FN: With the needle and dig it out, eh? Used to get plenty, you know.

MM: Yeah? Up on Kūhiō Beach?

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. Those days, the Kūhiō Beach used to have a restaurant. One restaurant right on the beach.

MM: Which one was that?

FN: Dean's Restaurant. [Dean's By-the-Sea.]

MM: Dean's? That's the one that became Waikīkī Tavern later on?

FN: No. That was [located] right [on Kalākaua Avenue] in front of 'Ōhūa Avenue.

MM: Right in front of 'Ōhūa?

FN: St. Augustine Church (was) across [it], Kalākaua [Avenue].

MM: Did they still have a lot of families living along the beach?

FN: No, those days, never had people living on the beach. Only that "Sonny" Cunha. . . .

MM: "Sonny" Cunha? "Sonny" Cunha lived on the beach?

FN: No. "Chichi" Cunha had the one right by the ocean, you know.

MM: By the ocean? Close to the ocean?

FN: Close to the ocean. But "Sonny" was (on) Kalākaua Avenue. Kapahulu [Avenue]. Right on the corner.

MM: Oh. They had a big family, eh?

FN: I don't know. Where Aoki [Store] used to be, (on the opposite side), had the Holt family. My father always talk about Hester Holt. Lemon Holt or Hester Holt, or I don't know what. Every time when my mother give birth, she used to go and register for us at the Board of Health.

MM: So, what was she?

FN: She used to work for the Board of Health, I think. Hester.

MM: Hester Holt. She was a nurse? You don't know?

FN: Nurse or something, I don't know. So they all used to report it to her, and then she would register everybody. You know, the death and everything for all the people living in Waikīkī, I guess. But the funny part is, I have one sister that died--one sister below me that died. I don't remember [her] because I must have been about two years or three years [old], and she was one year old, I think, when she died. She's [FN's sister] reported at the Board of Health when (she was) born and when she died. I'm the only one (chuckles) she must have forgot to register. I had to go (and) get the Hawai'i birth certificate. But good thing that there was lots of older people still living that they can be my witness. So, I got mine.

MM: Otherwise, what? You'd be considered an alien, yet.

FN: Well, my oldest brother could be, you know. My brother above me could be witness for me, too, huh? You know, that we were related.

MM: You remember when they started building the Ala Wai Canal?

FN: Ah, I don't know. It must have been when we were around about third grade or something.

MM: Third grade? And you were going to what school?

FN: Waikīkī School.

MM: Waikīkī School? What was that school like? What kind of children were enrolled there?

FN: All mixture. People from Kapahulu used to go. And then, we had Hawaiian, Portuguese, Japanese. Not too much Haoles.

MM: About how many students had?

FN: I don't know. Quite a bit. But the time I was in the sixth grade, we used to have Haoles from Waikīkī. They come down. Like (Melvin) Paoa, the football player. They was living up 'Ena Road. They had to come down Waikīkī School. And we used to have Mrs. Mabel King. She was our principal. Waikīkī [School] used to win lot of first prize for the most beautiful yard. You know, the school grounds. She used to plant these double petunias and, by the flagpole, I don't know what kind plant used to get--a tall, red plant. And (there) used to (be) one big, round stone (planter). Right (in the corner of the school). She used to have all kinds of pansy growing in there. And if you ever break one branch of that, oh, you get a [FN makes rapping sound]. She used to, you know . . .

MM: Yeah, she used to whack you folks?

FN: Whack the boys. So finally, I think some parents complained--after I left the school, after I went to Washington Intermediate [School]--that they discontinued that. They put pavement. You know, they paved it all up.

MM: They paved it? (Laughs)

FN: Yeah. You know, you playing ball and [if] the ball (fell) inside the garden, flowerbed. Oh, she would look at that broken branch and she used to get furious. Yeah. We had to be careful, you know.

MM: What kind discipline did she give? Just spanking?

FN: Spanking, and she used to scold. I remember, she used to make us go out in the yard, pull weeds.

MM: Pull weeds? That's punishment?

FN: No, the whole school.

MM: The whole school? Oh, as just part of her . . .

FN: That was just like her project like, you know. So Waikīkī School used to always win first prize for the best school grounds.

MM: Must have been a nice school, then. Was it a big area?

FN: Not too (big), but good enough, yeah?

MM: Yeah. That was kind of close by to your house.

FN: Yeah, [walking distance from the] house, yeah.

MM: Okay. What was some of the things that you did like after school?

FN: Oh, well, you had to go Japanese[-language] school, so we had no choice, eh?

MM: No choice?

(Laughter)

FN: You know, right after school, and you gotta go Japanese[-language] school.

MM: Where was the Japanese[-language] school?

FN: Was right across the stream from my house.

MM: Right across the stream?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: You know what the name of that stream?

FN: I don't know.

MM: That wasn't 'Āpuakēhau Stream?

FN: I don't know. We never did find out what the name was. (Machinery noise in background.) Was it when I was attending intermediate or what? Waikīkī had a tidal wave, and, wow, you should see the water rushing through there from the ocean. Come in the stream, and then it just went out like that.

MM: What year was this?

FN: I don't know. I don't remember. We had the tidal wave.

MM: You were still living in Waikīkī, then?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: And you were a small girl?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: So, it couldn't have been the 1946 one.

FN: No, no, no. Was way back. We used to stand and go watch the water recede and come rough like that, eh?

MM: Did you folks have flooding problems like, you know, this . . .

FN: Yeah. Well, we never had the flooding problem because, you see, when the man wen fill up the pond to build the two duplex, he made a stone wall in the back. So, in order to go Japanese[-language] school, we used to go climb the wall, and go down, and go [to] Japanese[-language] school. That is when it's low tide. Then, you know, you can wade, go through. But when it comes high tide, you got to roll up your clothes way up here, you know. Because we didn't want to walk out to Kalākaua Avenue and come down Paoakalani [Avenue] to go. We used to either wade across because it was right across from my father's place, and then either go [through] Asuka Camp, you know. Used to be a bridge. And every time when get flood, the bridge would be washed away, and they got to build another bridge. And then, we had to go through one private road like. Not road, I would say, a path.

MM: Walkway, yeah.

FN: There used to (be) one huge banyan tree and had two-story high house. Those days, we (were) young, so we don't know, but we used to see this Chinese old men with the long pipe, smoking. Opium, huh? Yeah. My mother folks would tell, "Oh, they smoking opium." And they, oh, half dopey, like that. I remember this group of kids of us went to that place because we saw two men digging on the grounds, and we thought why, you know. They (were) in suits, you know. Digging the grounds for we didn't know what. Then we ask our parents, and they said, "Oh, they are looking for ahen." You know, that's narcotic, eh? In Japanese, opium, they call 'em ahen, yeah? And they was digging for those things. They thought the Chinese old man used to. . . .

MM: So, did those Chinese men live over there or that was . . .

FN: Yeah. They used to live in that. Only bachelors, you know. I remember that.

MM: And they used to bury their opium, so . . .

FN: Yeah, so that the narcotic agents cannot find it, huh? Once we saw the narcotic agent--and they all Haoles, two Haoles, come with suit--and then they was digging in the ground looking for that. My mother

said, "Oh, that's ahen." Ahen, you know. We don't know what it was, eh? In those days, nobody going tell, "Oh, they smoking opium."

MM: This is around 1920, then?

FN: Yeah. Yeah, all, they sitting on the porch, the verandah. And all half---just like they gone already.

MM: You ever watch them smoke, how they put the . . .

FN: No. We used to be scared of--I mean, they don't do you any harm, but we was afraid, yeah? So, we just walk away. We never go near, go up the steps, or anything, because our parents told us not to. . . .

MM: They tell you not to go?

FN: Not to go. But they [the opium smokers] don't harm you or anything. But they [FN's parents] said to keep away from that place. So we only used to use the path to go Asuka Camp or use that place to go Japanese[-language] school. But that's about all.

MM: That's interesting, though.

FN: Yeah.

MM: You mentioned that there was a little grave in your folks' yard.

FN: Yeah. Her skull is buried, eh?

MM: Can you explain a little bit about that?

FN: You know, the kind old folks, they go, da kine, what do you call that? Odai-san, or whatever. My mother used to be strong person that, oh, believe in that kind (of religion), Tenrikyō, and all that. They told her that there was one girl's skull right where we go up the stairs.

MM: Yeah. To your house?

FN: To our house. So, couple of times, I see, she have foods and flowers. So, I asked why go put food and flowers right on the ground there. And then, she told the neighbor lady that, oh, I keep on asking so much that she told me that a small girl is buried there and she's sort of jealous of me. You know, wear nice clothes and go out. So, they said to put the flowers and the fruits to make her happy.

MM: Did they make one monument?

FN: No, no. We didn't do that. We just left it as is.

MM: But the Odai-san came and said, "This is the spot"?

FN: Yeah, I think so.

MM: Did they go through some kind of ceremony, or . . .

FN: Well, that, I don't know because maybe my mother had it done when I wasn't home. But they just told her to put that. So, she used to do it. And then, I don't know, after few years, she died, so I never thought anything about it.

MM: Oh. Your mother died?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: How old was she when she died?

FN: Forty-six.

MM: Young, yet.

FN: Young, yeah? My youngest kid brother was just going start in sixth grade.

MM: Did you folks ever go like playing with other kids on Waikīkī?

FN: Yeah, we used to play with the Sasaki Camp family, the Asuka Camp, and the Aoki--you know, all the business people (on Kalākaua Avenue).

MM: The Hawaiian people used to. . . .

FN: We didn't mingle with the Hawaiians, too much. Never had (many) Hawaiian families. Had, but then we never played with them.

MM: You folks ever went, you know, walking up and down Kalākaua to go play with children down the street?

FN: No. Our parents won't allow us. You know, we always have to be near where they know where we are.

MM: That's funny, because Waikīkī was kind of an open area.

FN: Open area, yeah, wide, wide, open area.

MM: Wide open. What did the place look like? I mean, what do you remember?

FN: All I can remember is that when they dug the [Ala Wai] Canal, (they covered up the stream, rice fields, and the duck ponds, so) those places used to be all vacant lot with only those corals and things. And very few family used to live. Up to Kūhiō [Avenue], oh, was vacant. And then, gradually, they start building the houses. Then the Haoles start coming in.

MM: Did anybody raise cattle over there?

FN: No.

MM: No. Had kiawe trees, though, yeah?

FN: Yeah. Lots of kiawe trees, but we never had any other family except the one, you know, my father's place, the Nakamuras, and the Nadamotos. Had that Yoshimura family.

MM: The Yoshimotos used to live in . . .

FN: Waikīkī. They came later on.

MM: They came later on. Did your mother ever work?

FN: All the people that used to live in Waikīkī, they're always surprised that the ladies in Waikīkī are not the kind that just stay home, you know, housewife. They all used to take in laundry.

MM: They used to take in laundry?

FN: Yeah, the Haole people laundry.

MM: The tourists?

FN: No, no. Family. [Resident Haole families.]

MM: The family laundry?

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. So, they all used to either go clean [houses] or else they used to take in laundry. Majority used to take in laundry. Almost every family, I think, they used to take in laundry. All the Waikīkī family women, they never loafed. When we had the store land on Kapahulu Avenue, this lady bought property right in the back of us, though. She said they were living in Pāwa'a. And then, she said she used to hear stories about all the ladies down Waikīkī. They either go out, housemaid, clean the house, or else they take in laundry. There wasn't a woman that just stay home doing nothing, you know. Even like the Nadamotos, the mother, and all of that. All, every one. And you know, those days, the laundry, one family, you know what I mean? You have a whole, big bundle. And you only wash 'em for about two, three (chuckles) dollars. You have to boil it.

MM: Boil 'em?

FN: Yeah, you know, they used to boil in the olden days, the laundry, to get it clean.

MM: What did you boil it in, though?

FN: They used to get that kind big copper pot.

MM: Copper pots? They had to make that or they . . .

FN: You have to have that special made.

MM: From Downtown someplace?

FN: Someplace, they used to order.

MM: But they never had like their own cleaning shops, though.

FN: No, no, no. They all do indivi---at home. Each one do their own. They have their own customer.

MM: Was there someplace where everybody used to go wash?

FN: No, no, no. Everybody used to do it . . .

MM: Inside their house, yeah?

FN: Wherever they living.

MM: Yeah, where they live.

FN: So, naturally, it was outside, though.

MM: Outside, yeah. Outdoor.

FN: Because they had to make fire.

MM: Did they use a certain kind soap?

FN: They used to use this brown soap. I don't know what you call that. It has a strong smell, you know. Huge, big soap. They used to just rub that soap on, and scrub 'em with their hand. And then, they used, boil the laundry. Yeah.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MM: Okay. Did you guys ever go down to the beach?

FN: Oh, we used to swim in the morning, and then noon, and in the evening. Three times a day during summertime. That's why, my hair used to be, you know, from the water, used to get bleached. I used to look like. . . . So, when I used to go, even up to high school, people ask me, oh, if I peroxide my hair. But all the people in Waikiki, you know the kids, used to get, during the summer, oh, tanned, dark, and the hair all, with the salt water, bleached. And then, the Kūhiō Beach, too, I told you used to get the Dean's Restaurant. At that time, the Kūhiō Beach, you could walk miles and miles out and only get one shallow wave used to come in. But now, you don't have that.

MM: How come?

FN: Because they took off the corals.

MM: Somebody came and dredged the beach?

FN: I guess the City and County or whatever.

MM: But you guys used to swimming over there, fishing . . .

FN: We used to go surfing.

MM: Surfing?

FN: Yeah. In order to go surfing, to catch the bigger waves--and those days, the surfboard [was a very] heavy board. Two, three people sometimes had to carry. And you had to walk way, way out to catch the waves to come in. Because (it) used to be all sand.

MM: What kind surfboard was that? That was redwood?

FN: Yeah. Or just get any kind as long as you had one lumber. Used to be about that thick, you know.

MM: How old you were . . .

FN: Intermediate. Washington. [At that time, FN attended Washington Intermediate School.]

MM: Intermediate, already?

FN: Yeah, intermediate.

MM: Who did you learn from?

FN: Our days, people ask, "Oh, how you learn how to swim?" Nobody taught us. You just swim. You know what I mean? Now days kids, they go to classes, huh? But our days, if you (want to) swim, you just learn how to swim yourself. You got to learn how to float and swim yourself. Nobody going teach us.

MM: Just jump in the water, eh?

FN: You just (go) in the water and swim, that's all. So, there's no such thing as certain kind of way of freestyle or butterfly, or what. You just swim.

MM: Oh, so all your brothers like that, all learned how to swim just by themselves, then?

FN: Yeah. All of the people in the Waikīkī, we just learn how to swim by ourselves. Nobody to teach us.

MM: Did your parents know how to swim?

FN: My father.

MM: Your father did? Did he go out fishing?

FN: Yeah, he used to go out fishing on the boat by himself. He said, oh, he like (to) eat opaparu, so he used to go out. Nighttime, huh? And then, about an hour or so later, he come back with a bag.

MM: What kind fish is that?

FN: Opaparu.

MM: Opaparu? What is that?

FN: It's good-eating fish, you know.

MM: Yeah? What did the thing look like? What color . . .

FN: Kind of pale-looking, (pinkish) fish.

MM: Was it something like menpachi?

FN: Yeah, but it's not red.

MM: It's not red?

FN: Pinkish color.

MM: Pinkish color. What did you guys cook with that?

FN: Charcoal.

MM: You guys didn't make soup out of it?

FN: My mother used to make miso soup, miso soup base, but we hardly. . . . Most of the time it was over charcoal, broiled.

MM: What kind of food you guys used to eat, before?

FN: I wouldn't say it was luxury, but then we used to have chicken. You know, people from Kapahulu used to come and sell chicken.

MM: Every so often, fish . . .

FN: Fish.

MM: . . . you guys catch.

FN: My brother folks used to catch. My father always used to catch.

MM: And the crab.

FN: And the crab, lobsters.

MM: Not the 'a'ama crab, though? Did you folks . . .

FN: No, no, no. Not that. We don't eat that. We used to go down the ocean.

MM: Yeah, and catch crab?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: What kind crab?

FN: What do you call that crab?

MM: The Haole crab, the white crab?

FN: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MM: There used to be lot of crabs?

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. Lobsters, huh?

MM: Lobsters, too.

FN: Yeah. My brother folks used to catch lot of squid, octopus.

MM: You ever used to go out there help them catch?

FN: No. Because I used to hate when they go fishing. I'm the one that had to go clean the fish.

(Laughter)

MM: When I go fishing, I clean 'em myself. Or my father, if I leave it in the refrigerator, he'll eat it so he'll clean it himself. But maybe like they just bring the fish back, and then that's your job to clean it or something.

FN: And then, when they catch that kind big kala, ho, we don't like. But one of my father's tenants liked that, so she used to make soup. Ho, when I smell that, you know that seaweed smell, oh, I used to get sick when she. . . . And they used to love that.

MM: Was she Japanese lady?

FN: Yeah, Japanese lady. Mrs. Yanagawa. She passed away. She moved to 'Aiea. Oh, she used to love that fish. You know, had lot of oil, eh? And then, my father folks used to catch this white eel, yeah? He used to give to another tenant because they liked that charcoal-broiled. But we never eat that.

MM: Was there like ogo?

FN: Ogo, yeah.

MM: There was ogo on Waikīkī?

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. We used to go get. Plenty.

MM: Hardly anything now.

FN: A couple of years ago, when my grandson still in high school, oh, he used to bring home bags full. You know, he used to go by Fort DeRussy. They get the long one, and they get the short one.

MM: Outside the . . .

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. He knows where (to pick the ogo).

MM: I always figured over there was kinda deep, the water.

FN: No. And so, everybody surprised. That's why, I always give the lady across the street, and then other people. But the part is to clean that thing, yeah?

MM: Yeah. So, you folks swam up and down the beach or you guys were limited to just that area . . .

FN: We just swim . . .

MM: Kūhiō Beach area?

FN: Kūhiō Beach area. Hardly anybody used to come. Just like the beach was only for us, you know. Only very few people used to be on the beach.

MM: When you guys went like to Kapi'olani Park, did they still have like horse races?

FN: When we were kids, yeah.

MM: And polo?

FN: Polo, we used to go watch. But that was up to [the time FN attended] elementary school. But after that, we never did.

MM: How did people travel up and down Kalākaua [Avenue] before? Was there the trolleys?

FN: Trolley. Oh, first used to be the streetcar, and then the trolley.

MM: When you went to Washington Intermediate [School], what year was that? Before 1930?

FN: Mm hmm. Well, let's see, now. I graduated McKinley [High School] in 1933. And we went up, so. . . . Twenty-seven, I think.

MM: From Waikīkī, you went to Washington [Intermediate School] around 1927?

FN: At that time, still yet, we was catching the streetcar.

MM: Streetcar? That was electric?

FN: I think so. I don't (remember).

MM: Oh, the car was pulled by . . .

FN: Because the track was in the center of the road. And you have to go, you know . . .

MM: Right down Kalākaua [Avenue]?

FN: Kalākaua [Avenue], yeah. And then, you go right in from the side, just like the one in San Francisco.

MM: You jump on?

FN: Jump on.

MM: How much was the fare?

FN: Would be nickel.

MM: Only nickel? And that would take you to where?

FN: Washington Intermediate [School].

MM: All the way?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: How did traffic go, though? Up through what street?

FN: You know that Kalākaua Avenue, and you know where the McCully bridge is.

MM: Went over the McCully bridge?

FN: They never get the bridge at that time. Oh, when we used to catch the streetcar, that was when we were young time, over there used to be all da kine duck ponds, huh? But when we started to go intermediate [school], then they got the trolley, you know. That was, we know is electric. Then we used to go out to Kalākaua [Avenue] to King Street.

MM: By then, they'd already completed the canal, then.

FN: Yeah, yeah.

MM: So, they had the bridge put in over McCully?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: Over McCully Stream . . . And did all the Waikīkī kids go to Washington Intermediate [School]?

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. So, when I used to go McKinley [High School], used to get only McKinley [High School], Punahou [School], St. Louis [College], huh? And Kam [i.e., Kamehameha Schools]. That's all. And I think after I left, Roosevelt [High School] came in. Or was before? One year before?

MM: I don't know when Roosevelt was built. They had a Normal School.

FN: Yeah, that's where my brother folks went.

MM: They went to Normal School?

FN: Normal School.

MM: Did they plan on becoming schoolteachers or something, or anybody could go to Normal School?

FN: Anybody could go Normal School, but by the time we got out, they discontinued that Normal School. My oldest brother went there.

MM: Were you still going Japanese[-language] school?

FN: No, by that time, we went to intermediate, after that, we quit.

MM: Was Japanese[-language] school just as strict then as . . .

FN: No. You know why? We had one Mr. Watanabe, the principal. And he was a UH [University of Hawai'i] graduate. We used to say that, oh, we want to go to the football game. But like Hongwanji or any other Japanese-language school, they couldn't go to the football game. But like Mr. Watanabe, he used to tell us, "Go, show your school spirit."

MM: Oh, good, eh?

FN: Yeah. Because he was UH graduate. So, we used to be able to go to the football games.

MM: Which football games you talking about? The Washington Intermediate [School]?

FN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MM: They used to have football games?

FN: Yeah.

MM: Between what school?

FN: Other intermediate [schools].

MM: Yeah? Like . . .

FN: Kalakaua [Intermediate School].

MM: Because I didn't think that like intermediate schools had football games.

FN: Football team. And I know when I was in the seventh grade, you know that Hiram Fong? His wife was, I think, ninth grade, I think. Either in eighth or ninth grade. I remember. Ella Fong.

MM: Ella Fong?

FN: No. Ella something. And then, she married Hiram Fong. I remember. She was above us.

MM: In that area you're talking about, like Washington Intermediate School is all McCully [area].

FN: McCully.

MM: That area, there were still duck ponds, yet?

FN: Yeah, yeah. They still had duck ponds. I think, the 'Ena Road side, yeah? Yeah. Because there was one girl, Chinese girl. Her father used to (own) the duck pond.

MM: You folks ever used to go over there to eat or get ducks?

FN: No. Because my parents, they don't believe---those days, they never used to eat. [Japanese] never used to go for ducks, eh?

MM: Chinese used to eat, though.

FN: Chinese, yeah. They go great for ducks, but we were more on the chicken side, eh?

MM: When you went to Washington Intermediate [School], did they have a special kind of class they stressed that you should take or . . .

FN: Yeah. We had to take a foreign language.

MM: Foreign language?

FN: Yeah. So, I took German. I don't know now. You tell me one German word, I don't (remember). So we had one German teacher, you know. Then, we had to take math, and all that, and social studies. Then, the other subject was Home Ec--Home Economics.

MM: Was there a big problem with pidgin English? They tried to eliminate it, or . . .

FN: No, they never used to bother too much of that.

MM: Oh, only recently, then.

FN: Yeah.

MM: Did you ever like walk home from school once in a while?

FN: We always caught the trolley to come home. Never did walk home. My parents won't allow it. My mother wouldn't allow it. Because we had to come back to Japanese[-language] school. So, we never did linger around.

MM: By the time you were little bit older than when you were going to Waikīkī School, so did your pattern change? You know, the things you did after school?

FN: The pattern changed. We just used to walk around Downtown and come home.

MM: You used to walk Downtown? From . . .

FN: Yeah, from Washington Intermediate [School], we used to walk (to) town. But coming home, we catch the trolley.

MM: What was there Downtown for you guys to go do?

FN: Fort Street. Used to get that old Benson Smith [Drugstore], and, you know, the Hawai'i Theater, huh? And I remember, we wen cut--first time in my life I ever wen cut class. We went to go see Dracula. (Laughs) The first original Dracula.

MM: Dracula? (Laughs)

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. The first Dracula came out.

MM: That was the Bela Lugosi one?

FN: Yeah, yeah.

MM: The Bela Lugosi one.

FN: That was the first time I ever cut class, and then went to that (movie).

MM: Oh, I thought maybe you're talking about the older one, the silent film one.

FN: No. And then, you know the St. Augustine Church, it used to show movies on every Friday evening, free.

MM: Inside the church?

FN: No, out in the yard. You cannot sit down--well, some people will sit down, but usually we would stand up. They used to show a lot of Charlie Chaplin movies. We seen a lot of Charlie Chaplin, and what that cowboy? I forgot his name now. Tom Mix.

MM: Tom Mix? Those are all silent films, huh?

FN: Yeah, they were all silent movies. The church used to run that show. Everybody was invited. You know, free.

MM: They went around asking for donations?

FN: No, they never asked for donations or anything. They used to show for all the Waikīkī people. You know, the congregation, and the people who live on 'Ōhū Avenue, or Lemon Road, or Paoakalani.

MM: Was the Waikīkī Theater open by then?

FN: No.

MM: Not yet?

FN: Waikīkī Theater opened, I think, while I was in high school.

MM: In high school? Around 1930? I think they opened around 1933. I'm not sure, but. Did some of the tourists show up at those showings [at the church] or strictly for the residents?

FN: Strictly for the residents around Waikīkī. You know, where we were living.

MM: How was the tourist traffic back then, around 1930s?

FN: When my father used to work there, you know, the tourists used to come on the steamers. So, only the well-to-do used to come down.

MM: Only the rich ones, eh? Did the hotels ever come to you folks to have people do their laundry or . . .

FN: No. I think they had their own.

MM: They had their own like servant's quarters, eh?

FN: Yeah, yeah. I don't know what that street name. We never knew the people there too good. But then, they used to get the Chow family living in that servant's quarters. And then, the Kimuras, you know. The man used to be head captain, you know, waiter. You know where the Rainbow is now on the corner?

MM: The Rainbow?

FN: Yeah, Drive-In?

MM: Rainbow Drive-In, yeah.

FN: That's where the Kimura [family], after the man retired, they bought the property and moved there. We used to talk to Mr. Kimura's wife. From the Japanese[-language] school, I told you, we had Mr. Watanabe, used to be modern, huh? So, we used to go to the baseball game. You know, Asahi baseball game.

When the Nadamotos was still living across our place, they had one Muraoka family. He had one younger brother, came from Japan. He was so good looking. He was about eighteen or nineteen. All the girls used to fall in love with him. He worked for AmFac for a long, long time, salesman. And then, every time, when he and I, we talk, he say, yeah, when he first came to Hawai'i, he said the uncle. . . . You know, he used to live with the uncle in the servant's--they call the servants' quarter, but it was a house by itself, you know, individual. It wasn't da kine like boardinghouse looking thing, you know.

MM: Had lot of different cottages?

FN: Cottages, yeah, for the working people. You know, we were talking about gold coins. And he said the uncle used to have cigar boxes just full of . . .

MM: Coins.

FN: Coins. You know, the twenty-dollar one? That's a dollar size, huh? He said, hoo, at that time, he wish he wen snitch few of it, you know. Because the uncle wouldn't know, wouldn't miss it, you know.

MM: I wonder what he ever did with 'em, then?

FN: I don't know. After that place, he retired, they moved to where [Rainbow Drive-In is now]. He and the wife and the sons--the oldest son went to the Mainland to work and came back--and they were living there and then they sold that place to Rainbow. They moved to Kailua or someplace.

MM: There was lot of Japanese people who worked at the Moana [Hotel], then?

FN: Yeah. Japanese, (Chinese and a few Filipinos). And I remember, you know that [Myles] Fukunaga case, huh? It was right in the back of where he had the boy.

MM: That was by the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] side, huh?

FN: No. Across Kalākaua [Avenue]. You know, the . . .

MM: Ma uka of Kalākaua [Avenue].

FN: It was (near) quarters where the workingmen used to (live).

MM: Did the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] have servant quarters, too?

FN: I think it was for the people who work for the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] and the Moana Hotel. And yet, the place was all vacant (lot), you know. Nothing but bushes and whatnot.

MM: That's where the guy [Myles Fukunaga] held the little kid [Gil Jamieson]?

FN: Yeah, so we just went to see how he get. . . . I don't know the kind of bushes it was, but he sort of shape 'em like a shelter like.

MM: What was the story behind that, anyway?

FN: I don't know. I think he kidnapped the boy for ransom, huh? It didn't go good, so by the time they got the ransom, he already killed the boy. [On September 18, 1928, Gil Jamieson, son of Hawaiian Trust vice-president Frederick Jamieson, was kidnapped. Four thousand dollars in ransom was paid the following day. The boy's body was found in brush opposite the Royal Hawaiian Hotel on September 20, 1928. Myles Fukunaga, who held a grudge against Hawaiian Trust, was arrested and confessed to the murder on September 22, 1928. He was tried, found guilty and finally hanged on November 19, 1929.] People used to say they used to feel sorry for the [Fukunaga] family, huh? You know, those days, it was shame.

MM: Their family lived in Waikīkī?

FN: No. But you know, those days, it was pretty bad, yeah? Now days, people murder another person, (they) think nothing of it. But in that time, it was a real. . . .

MM: It was a big case.

FN: Big case. They were saying like the sister used to go Japanese[-language] school or English school, you know. Oh, people used to just snub at them, talk bad about them. I can just imagine what they went through, yeah?

MM: That kind stuff happens all over the world.

FN: Yeah, tragedy, yeah? We used to feel sorry.

MM: You were telling me about the Ala Wai Canal, before, and the swimming contest

FN: Swimming contest and they used to have floats coming down.

MM: That used to be for what, anyway?

FN: I guess, for

MM: Anybody's holiday?

FN: Wasn't a particular holiday. I guess, certain season time, they think of having those.

MM: Who used to organize that?

FN: I don't know who. Because we were young, yet. When the canal opened, that's when they had that.

MM: When you were going to intermediate [school], then, they still did that? No?

FN: No. They gave up. I guess it was too costly, huh? Because it was real elaborate-looking boats, like da kine you see in Japan, you know. (Chuckles) Fancy kind.

MM: Was something to do with the Japanese community, then?

FN: I think so. Fancy, you know. Real beautiful. I don't think you can see that kind anymore.

MM: When was that? At night?

FN: At night.

MM: And they light the lanterns.

FN: All with lanterns, eh?

MM: Maybe during the summertime. No?

FN: I've forgotten whether it was summer or. . . . Oh, anyway, it was warm weather time. So we used to sit on the bank of the canal and then watch.

MM: I was just wondering whether or not it was like for O-Bon or something.

FN: I don't remember it was O-Bon or not. But I remember seeing that, you know.

MM: And then, the swimming contest.

FN: Yeah, I used to go and watch my brother swim. But at that time, the canal was clean, you know. Not like now.

MM: The swimming contest was like for schools?

FN: I guess so. From McKinley [High School].

MM: Did they have the Natatorium by then?

FN: Yeah, they had both.

MM: And they still had the swimming contest in the Ala Wai [Canal]?

FN: Yeah, Ala Wai [Canal].

MM: Who used to compete in that, though?

FN: All the Waikīkī. . . . I know several Hawaiians, and Japanese. I guess the schools.

MM: Kahanamokus used to swim?

FN: No, I don't think so. Because [Duke] Kahanamoku (was) much older than my brother. I guess it was from schools.

MM: Between schools. Yeah. You were saying that you folks used to go over the bridge, and then go to the Territorial fairgrounds.

FN: Territorial fairgrounds, yeah.

MM: And that there was a wooden bridge?

FN: Wooden bridge right across.

MM: From. . . .

FN: Right from 'Ōhūa Avenue to the. . . .

MM: To where the golf course is now, yeah?

FN: Golf course is now.

MM: So, what kind of things went on at the fairgrounds?

FN: Oh, I remember, had Ferris wheel. I forgot who the girl was. You know, when you ride the Ferris wheel, and her hair got caught in that stuff. They had to cut the hair off.

MM: Got caught in the Ferris wheel?

FN: Yeah, you know one of those wheels or I don't know. Because our days, we used to have long hair, huh? So, when the wind blow, you know, it got caught. And the only ride I know I remember was the Ferris wheel. But the most important thing was the display (with fireworks at night).

MM: What kind of displays did they have?

FN: Each booth is---not booth, but (one) building [would] have farm vegetables, and one [would be for] art. The art kind is all da kine things that you make at home, you know.

MM: All the arts and crafts stuff, yeah?

FN: Arts and crafts and things like that. They used to give out yardsticks and, oh, lot of things, you know those days, eh?

MM: Yardsticks? For prizes?

FN: No, I mean to anybody. So you see everybody walking with yardsticks and things like that.

MM: They had buildings set up, then?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: There's like auditoriums? No?

FN: No, just this building, like. You know, this house, but only one shell. They have tables inside where you display all those things.

MM: You folks ever displayed anything?

FN: From my school, yeah. I was, I think, in fourth grade when I had this old Mrs. Alexander. She used to teach us how to make hem stitching and then make fringes, you know. And then, your embroidery on the corner. We used to make tablecloth and napkins--matching set, huh? She used to let us do all that.

MM: But this is when you were still in . . .

FN: Waikīkī.

MM: Waikīkī School.

FN: Elementary school.

MM: Okay, anyway, from Washington Intermediate [School], you went to graduate from McKinley [High School]. You were still riding the streetcars back and forth?

FN: No, not the streetcar. Trolley.

MM: What was school like over there? McKinley [High School]? Big school?

FN: Yeah. Was pretty big, because when I graduated, we had about 700 students.

MM: Seven hundred?

FN: Seven hundred fifty, I think.

MM: In your graduating class?

FN: Yeah. Because I told you it was the only (public) high school. People used to come from Kahuku and 'Ewa and all over there. So, because I was K--Kuramoto, you know the McKinley auditorium, we

graduated the first night. And then, from the people from N, the second night.

(Laughter)

FN: And we were allowed only one ticket. Only my mother could come. Because the graduates [took] so much of the seats, and then that's it. Each student was allowed one parent.

MM: But all your family was outside, waiting? No?

FN: Nighttime. Evening, so, no, nobody come around.

MM: Ward Estate was right next?

FN: Yeah, Ward Estate.

MM: That could be seen from the school?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: Was that a nice place? What was it like?

FN: It looked like a plantation-looking thing. With all the coconuts growing in there, the old house, you know.

MM: And the fish ponds.

FN: Fish ponds. But then, they had a high wall, so you couldn't look inside. And then, one of the students, Edward Hustace, that was (his) aunty.

MM: That's the Hustace from Waikīkī, right? Same one?

FN: Mm hmm [yes]. He graduated with us, Edward Hustace. So, when was that? Last year, the other year. Wait. Last year, this is '85, '84. Eighty-three, we had our fiftieth anniversary at the O'ahu Country Club.

MM: At O'ahu Country Club? How many people showed up?

FN: Oh, you'd be surprised. We had 200-something. We had people come from Singapore.

MM: Singapore?

FN: Yeah, one of my good Chinese friend, you know. After we graduate high school, she said, oh, Chiang Kai-Shek was still in the main China. So she said, "Oh, I going China and marry one general, come back."

(Laughter)

FN: And she liked it (there) so much, so she stayed there, and then she moved to Singapore.

MM: Did she marry a general?

FN: I don't know. I saw her, but I didn't have time to talk to her. But she (made) several trips over here, but then they say she married to a pretty wealthy man.

MM: After you graduated, then you went to work?

FN: No. My mother died one year later, see. [Nineteen] thirty-four. So, I had to look after---I had five brothers. The youngest was in the sixth grade, so. I used to do part-time work for this woman. Jean Hobbs. She used to be a writer. I used to go type for her.

MM: What kind of things did she write, though?

FN: She gave me one book. Hawai'i something, about the kuleanas. You know, about the Damons, and all that. She gave me the book, but I must have thrown it away. She died, but.

MM: You used to type for her?

FN: Yeah. The Damons hired her to write a book about the kuleanas (and the history of the Damon family). And I used to go to the [Hawai'i] Archives, (to) get all the information. I used to help her file all the newspaper clippings, compile it, so that she can read.

MM: Oh, shee, you was researcher, too, then.

FN: Yeah, she was a Canadian.

MM: You said you used to work at the cannery when you were going to school?

FN: Freshman. . . . Not freshman. Sophomore and junior year. No, was junior year and senior.

MM: What you used to do at the cannery?

FN: You know [where] the crushed pineapple come down? You got to pick up the eyes that fall in there. That's what I used to do.

MM: What they call that job?

FN: I don't know. You see, one pineapple would come down for (the trimmers and the packers). . . .

MM: After you core 'em, yeah?

FN: (No.) It goes to the packers, huh? And one will come down into this bin like, you know. Two people work on it. My girlfriend and I

used to work. You know, get this kind of a tong like, and we used to pick all the eyes out. But then, we didn't have to do real good job because that thing will go down the conveyor to another table. (Those people on the second table had to clean it real clean.) We used to work on the platform. And then, the people down below, they used to pack the pineapple rings. You know, pick the good grade . . .

MM: Yeah, the packing table.

FN: Packing table. They would put 'em in the can. But they used to call 'em "jam," but I don't know. You know, crushed pineapple.

MM: Crushed pine. How much you used to make over there?

FN: Fifteen cents an hour.

MM: Fifteen cents. And at that time, that wasn't too bad, was it?

FN: No, wasn't too bad. But (we) used to work long hours.

MM: How you used to get to the canneries from Waikīkī?

FN: Trolley, the bus. No, wasn't the bus. It was still the trolleys.

MM: Still there. Did they have, you know, that redlight district, that Iwilei?

FN: You mean . . .

MM: Had the prostitute houses and . . .

FN: Prostitute housing. And River Street side, too.

MM: Down River Street? In that area, then. Close to the waterfront, though, yeah?

FN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: And you guys had to pass that area?

FN: No, we didn't have to. After we get off from the bus, we used to walk down to CPC [California Packing Corporation], you know. So, we didn't see that part.

MM: I always thought that that place [Iwilei area] was right by the bus [depot]. . . . Well, now, it's no longer the bus depot, but used to be the OR&L [O'ahu Railway & Land Co.] Honolulu station.

FN: Honolulu station, yeah.

MM: Was it in that area? All the prostitutes?

FN: Oh, they used to be on Nu'uanu, too, huh?

MM: Yeah? On Nu'uanu?

FN: And I know, after the war started, 1941. I was pregnant with my first daughter. I used to go to the River Street side to this beautician, Charm Beauty Shop. She retired already. She [later moved] down on Kapahulu Avenue, but [that] building came down, and then the new Hee Hing building [went] up. And then, I sit in the beauty shop, and I see, oh, all the men lining up. And I said, "Ey, Ethel, what those men all with dirty clothes line up over there? What they buying?" And they start laughing. Was the prostitutes. You see, downstairs, they had shops, huh? You know, right (across) that river.

MM: River Street?

FN: You know, the river, they have. And then, across, used to have all old buildings. Right upstairs used to get the prostitutes, so had one, two, three (or more) rooms. You know, they (used to call those men) the defense workers, huh?

And when I married my husband, I moved to Lemon Road. I was renting this duplex from that Kobara family. They used to have something like a court[yard]. A long court, and then (they were made into) apartment, you know, divided. Just (like) studio with kitchen facilities and bathroom.

MM: How long you stayed over there, then?

FN: I stayed about a year and three months and I bought this place.

MM: Then you came over here?

FN: Oh, you know, those defense workers, they used to go wild. And was blackout, too, huh? Oh, they used to (drink a lot, fight), shoot guns and everything.

END OF INTERVIEW

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Volume I

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